

Neighborhood Nine Study

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Summary, Recommendations and Action Plan



Neighborhood Nine Study

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N e i g h b o r h o o d N i n e S t u d y

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Introduction

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Neighborhood Nine Location Map



INTRODUCTION TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD STUDY PROCESS

History

During the 1980's, the City of Cambridge, along with the surrounding region, witnessed a wave of commercial growth and economic development. This growth expanded the City's tax base and created new jobs and opportunities for residents. While many welcomed this prosperity, it also brought about an increasing awareness of issues that are of concern to neighborhood residents: increased building density, traffic congestion and parking problems, the rising cost of housing, inadequate open space, and the threat to neighborhood character and quality of life.

Since 1988, the Community Development Department (CDD), through its neighborhood planning program, has conducted comprehensive studies in ten of the city's neighborhoods. CDD staff work collaboratively with a citizen committee appointed by the City Manager to identify planning opportunities and make recommendations for a course of action. Recommendations address such issues as traffic and parking, housing affordability and homeownership, neighborhood commercial areas and employment, park maintenance, and rezoning for areas that are inappropriately zoned. As part of each neighborhood study, CDD collects data on demographic changes, as well as changes in housing markets, land use, and development potential in each neighborhood.

For each study, the City Manager appoints a committee of neighborhood residents, small business owners, and civic leaders, as well as staff from CDD, to review the data, identify problems that exist in the neighborhood, and make recommendations as to how to resolve these problems. Where appropriate, the recommendations are incorporated into the work programs of City departments for implementation; in some cases, this implementation takes place over a short period of time, in others it is part of long-term strategic planning.

The neighborhood study process has informed the City's growth policy document, *Towards a Sustainable Cambridge*, which outlines the City's planning assumptions and policies in the areas of land use, housing, transportation, economic development, open space, and urban design. CDD staff drafted the growth policy document in 1992 and 1993 after a series of workshops with citizen, business,

NEIGHBORHOOD NINE STUDY



A JOINT REPORT OF THE
NEIGHBORHOOD NINE STUDY COMMITTEE AND THE
CAMBRIDGE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

and institutional representatives. It recognizes that Cambridge's diversity of land uses, densities, and population groups should be retained and strengthened.

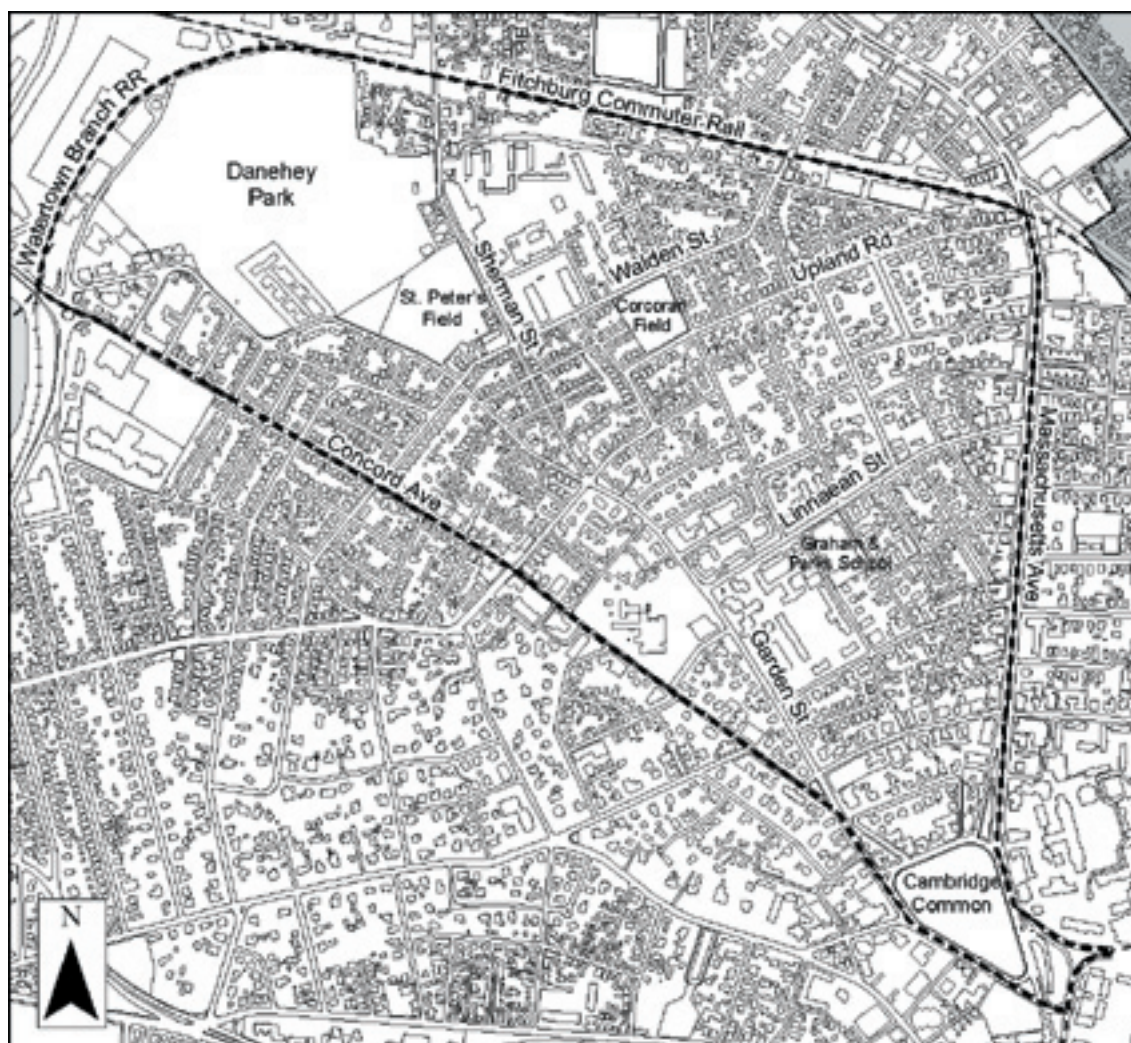
Neighborhood Study Updates

To ensure that these studies remain current and useful, CDD has begun the practice of periodic study updates. Each neighborhood study will be updated approximately every three to four years. The update process involves a series of public meetings, where community members are invited to comment on the original study recommendations, suggest new items, and prioritize issues. City staff from various departments attend these meetings to give presentations and answer questions as needed.

The end result of the update process is a "Summary, Recommendations, and Action Plan" document that is made available to the public, City Council, and City staff. The update process is intended to ensure that neighborhood studies remain living documents that can evolve with the changing times.

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Neighborhood Nine Boundaries



The following are the goals and objectives underlying the neighborhood study and update process:

Goal

To enhance and inform the delivery of municipal services through collaborative planning between citizens, City Council, and City Departments.

Objectives

- To create a planning process that has input from community members;
- To inform members of the community by making neighborhood study reports available to the public, in print and online.
- To provide information to department heads and other City staff about community needs and values.
- To assist with the budget and management process.
- To formulate long-term plans for neighborhood improvements.
- To conduct work on a neighborhood level that is reflective of larger citywide planning practices (such as the Growth Policy Document and the Report of the Green Ribbon Open Space Committee);

Implementation

The goal of these studies has always been to create a strong link between community process and the everyday work done by the City's many departments. While this is usually the case, there has been a renewed interest on the part of CDD and the City Council Neighborhood and Long-Term Planning Committee in ensuring that these studies remain an integral part of the strategic management, budgeting, and daily operations of City department. For this reason, CDD will increase outreach to other departments while developing studies and once they are completed help integrate recommendations into actual work plans.

Original Neighborhood Nine Study

The Neighborhood Nine Study Committee met for seven months from November 1993 to May 1994. The Neighborhood Study process reviewed and discussed the study topic areas. The Committee developed 60 specific recommendations for the neighborhood regarding Housing, Land Use and Zoning, Urban Design, Open Space, Public Safety, Economic Development and Institutional Use. In April and November of 2002, CDD held two neighborhood wide meetings to update the community on the recommendations of the 1994 study. Since that time a number of recommendations have been completed, are underway, remain as future action items for the city, or call for no action at this time.